

**Town of Wallingford  
Special Town Meeting Minutes  
August 6, 2018  
Wallingford Town Hall**

Town Moderator Jay Kenlan opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Selectboard members in attendance were Chair Bill Brooks, Vice Chair Gary Fredette, Nelson Tift, Rose Regula and Mark Tessier. Mr. Kenlan reviewed the rules for the meeting and read the Warning as follows: The legal voters of the Town of Wallingford, Vermont are hereby warned and notified to meet at the Wallingford Town Hall on Monday evening, August 6, 2018 at 6:30 p.m. to act upon the following articles.

ARTICLE I. Shall the voters of the Town of Wallingford vote to adopt or amend town plans by Australian ballot, pursuant to 24 V.S.A. §4385(c)?

ARTICLE II. Shall the voters of the Town of Wallingford vote to adopt bylaws, bylaw amendments or bylaw repeals by Australian ballot, pursuant to 24 V.S.A. §4442 ( c ) (2)?

ARTICLE III. To conduct such other business as may properly come before the meeting.

Rob Carey moved for the adoption of Article I; Don Emery seconded.

Lynn Edmunds, who spearheaded the petition to change the method for adopting the town plan and bylaws, read his statement (attached). He felt that he and others were not being heard during the many meetings held while the Town Plan was being revised. He would like to be able to vote on these plans and bylaws through Australian ballot.

Laura Conti expressed her concern with the low voter turnout tonight, and she would like these issues discussed and voted on at town meeting in March. Bruce Dobbins agreed, noting that approximately 4% of the voters are in attendance. He also asked that reconsideration be given to postpone this discussion until March.

Attorney Jennifer Hoult introduced herself and said that she had spoken at the public hearing in June. She reiterated that she had read the statutes and believes that our property rights are protected. These statutes, adopted by the Legislator, grants the Selectboard authority to adopt plans and bylaws. She added that the town plan is only a “wish list”, although it may affect grant availability for any future businesses coming to town. Ms. Hoult does not condone disrespectful treatment at meetings and urged people to run for elected positions. She also stated that zoning bylaws can change the impact of property values and encouraged voters to make their feelings known to the Selectboard.

Sue Carey believes in democracy and feels that Australian voting system gives more voters the chance to vote – either at the polls or by absentee ballot. She made a motion to move the question, although Moderator Kenlan cautioned that it would prevent more discussion on Article I.

Rob Barker announced that the vote on zoning regulations in 1971 was split then and is split now. He has confidence in the Selectboard, although he doesn't always agree with them. He added that the Town Plan allows Act 250 status for the town. He urged a "no" vote on the article.

Planning Commission member Kevin Mullion stated that many of the decisions on the town plan were state-driven. He added that just because opinions weren't taken at the many meetings held, that it didn't mean that they weren't heard.

Mike McMahon acknowledged that although there was a low voter turnout tonight, 225 voters signed the petition. He agreed that an Australian ballot vote is the best way to vote, and he proceeded to summarize the zoning bylaw approval timeline since 1971.

Although he favors a floor meeting, Rob Carey stated that Australian ballot voting would provide the extra checks and balances for the town plan and bylaws.

Laura Conti questioned the haste of this vote. Kathleen Upton asked that if the Selectboard takes a vote on the town plan, will there be a town meeting held to vote on the plan. Bill Brooks explained that the town plan was recently approved and is valid for eight years. He clarified that tonight's vote is on whether to change the way future plans and bylaws are voted on. Ruth Kitchin didn't understand the controversy, and Mr. Edmunds replied that property owners are being shut out of the process.

Curtis Lidstone stated that Australian ballot voting guarantees his right to vote and that the Town should be able to tell the Legislature what the town wants instead of the other way around. Ms. Houlton urged everyone to contact their legislators to change the law.

Joyce McMahon pointed out that a majority of the Selectboard is only three members agreeing, and she is hopeful that the Australian ballot vote would draw more voters to the polls. Curtis Lidstone asked when was the last contested Selectboard race. Gary Fredette replied that many of the board members continue to run for office as no one else will. He has always believed that a small voter attendance at town meeting correlates to confidence in the Selectboard. Mr. Fredette is certain that some of the town plan action items were suggested by residents. C. Lidstone said that he did not mean to negate the Selectboard's contribution to the town.

Robert McMahon asked for a paper ballot. Paper ballots were handed out to 82 voters with 59 voting yes, 22 voting no and 1 blank ballot.

Cecile Betit moved for the adoption of Article II; Don Emery seconded. There were various brief comments on this article concerning zoning bylaws, flood bylaws and subdivision bylaws. Robert McMahon asked for a paper ballot. Paper ballots were handed out to 76 voters with 54 voting yes and 22 voting no.

With no other business to come before the body, at 7:55 p.m. on a motion made by Rob Carey and seconded by Bruce Dobbins. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Submitted: \_\_\_\_\_ Town Moderator

\_\_\_\_\_ Selectboard Chair

\_\_\_\_\_ Town Clerk

